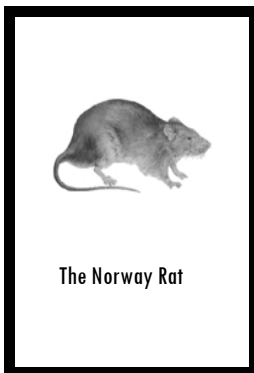


Rodent Control: It's the Law!

Rodent control is not just the right thing to do. For landlords, homeowners, and Somerville businesses, it's the law—the owner of the property on which rats are found is responsible for controlling the problem! Violations of the City's trash ordinance carry a \$50 fine for the first offense, a \$100 fine for the second offense, and a \$300 fine for the third offense.



Remember the following steps to help prevent a rodent problem where you live:

- UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM
- KNOW THE RATS
- FIND THEM
- STARVE THEM
- EVICT THEM
- EXTERMINATE THEM
- REPORT THEM
- ORGANIZE



Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

CITY OF SOMERVILLE
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Translated versions available
courtesy of the Cambridge Health Alliance

KEEPING YOUR PROPERTY AND
NEIGHBORHOOD RODENT FREE

Help Control Rodents in Somerville!



Call 311 or visit
www.ci.somerville.ma.us
and click on "311" to
report a rodent problem

CITY OF SOMERVILLE
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Here's how you can help prevent and address a rat problem in your neighborhood

UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM

Norway rats have become an increasing problem in Somerville. Rats are a serious public health concern, and must be controlled:

- Rats destroy and contaminate food and other household materials
- Rats and their fleas may transmit to humans various viruses, bacteria, and parasites.
- The potential for these diseases to spread may increase if rat populations are allowed to grow.

KNOW THE RATS

- Rats eat everything we eat, and lots more.
- They are extraordinary climbers, jumpers, and swimmers.
- They gnaw through plastic, wood, soft metals, wire (sometimes causing fires), and even cinderblock and brick.
- Rats squeeze into the tiniest spaces, nest wherever it's dark and warm, and breed like crazy.

FIND THEM

- Rats make their presence known by leaving burrows, droppings, gnaw marks and rub marks, tracks, trails, nests, and hidden food stashes.
- Any of these active rat signs is a Health Code violation. A live rat is also a violation.
- If you or anyone in your building sees a rat, call a pest management professional immediately.

STARVE THEM

Deprive them of food:

- A new law requires you to provide rodent-proof containers with tight-fitting lids for garbage and other refuse: store all trash in these containers on days leading up to your trash pickup day.
- Do not put your trash cans on the curb before 4:00pm on the day prior to trash pickup. This minimizes the time trash cans are uncovered.
- Replace missing lids and containers that have holes or tears.
- Wash garbage and recycling cans and the area around them regularly.
- Use rodent-proof containers to store food and pet food. Even inside, exposed food is an invitation to rats.
- Be aware of rodent activity in outdoor gardens and around fruit plants in your yard: rats eat fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Do not keep large compost bins.

Deprive them of water:

- Repair leaks in boilers, water tanks, washing machines, hoses, and pipes (including sewer pipes on your property).

EVICT THEM

Inside the building:

- Plug holes in floors and walls with wire mesh (copper, stainless steel, or aluminum). Cover the mesh with spackle, plaster, or hardening sealant.
- Block the space between doors and the floor with kick plates.
- Keep stairwells, airshafts, basements, and storage areas clean and clutter-free.
- Discard newspapers, old insulation, and cardboard boxes.

Outside the building:

- Repair broken windows, doors, screens, and roofs.

- Tear down or fix dilapidated fences and out-buildings.
- Remove abandoned vehicles, appliances, construction debris, and tires from yards and lots.
- Cut down grass and weeds that are 12 inches or taller and trim overgrown shrubbery.

EXTERMINATE THEM

The best way is to hire a licensed pest management professional (ask to see his or her Massachusetts State license). If you do it yourself:

- Read the label first on snap traps and glue traps. Follow directions carefully. Consult a pest management professional.
- Lay traps in places rats frequent (look for gnaw marks, droppings, etc.). Place them no more than 20 feet apart. For best results, use lots of them.
- Never put traps or poison where children or pets can reach them.
- When emptying or throwing away a trap, pick it up with a broom and dustpan – not your hands.

REPORT THEM

To report a rodent problem to the City:

- Dial 311.
- Visit www.ci.somerville.ma.us, click on "311," and make a request.

ORGANIZE

- Work with your neighbors to get rid of rats on your block. Rats are more than just an individual problem; **if your neighbor has rats, you have rats!**
- Create a neighborhood rodent watch with the people on your block. Together, you can make sure that rats cannot survive in your neighborhood.